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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



OCTOBER 5 – 11, 2008 IS NATIONAL FIRE PREVENTION WEEK!

You think of your home as the safest place to be. But how often do you check for hazards? If the answer is “not often”, you run a very real risk of danger. Fire departments responded to nearly 400,000 home fires in 2006. That’s why the theme of Fire Prevention Week 2008 is all about **preventing home fires!**

In an effort to raise public awareness of the need for **everyday fire prevention** in the home, the State Fire Marshal’s Office joins with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in providing information about this year’s National Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 5-11, 2008.

Last year, West Virginia’s fire departments responded to over 8,000 fires. **Thirty-six of these fires resulted in 42 deaths.** Every year, common causes of fire include misuse of electrical and heating equipment, open flames too close to a fuel source, careless smoking, cooking, unattended or uncontrolled outdoor burning, and arson.

Remember these tips to keep your family and property safe:

- Never leave a **burning candle** unattended. Extinguish all candles when you leave the room or go to bed. **ALMOST HALF** of all home fires started by candles begin in the bedroom. Do not use candles in the bedroom or other areas where people might fall asleep.
- Keep candles at least one foot away from anything that can burn, including curtains, blinds, wallpaper, clothing or any other material that can catch fire.

National Fire Prevention Week – “Prevent Home Fires!”

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- **Check all electrical appliances and extension cords** to make sure they're in good condition. Do not use damaged extension cords.
- Make sure that appliances and lights are plugged into **separate electrical outlets**.
- Check your **clothes dryer** after every load to remove lint—which is extremely combustible!
- Remember the **3-foot rule**! Keep a safety zone of 3 feet clear around any space heaters, away from upholstered furniture, bedding, curtains, etc.
- Be sure to have your **furnace and chimneys** inspected regularly.
- If you have fuel-burning appliances using gas, wood, kerosene, etc., it's a good idea to have a **carbon monoxide detector** installed in the vicinity of the sleeping areas of your home. Remember, carbon monoxide is called “**the silent killer**”—it's odorless, colorless, and is a leading cause of poisoning.
- Don't forget your **smoke alarms**! Because fire can grow and spread so quickly, having working smoke detectors in your home can mean the difference between life and death. Test them at least once a month, and replace batteries at least once a year—use a birthday or anniversary as a reminder. Replace detectors after 10 years.
- Develop and practice a **home escape plan**. Make sure your family knows two ways out of each room, a safe meeting place outside, how to call 9-1-1 once they're out, and why they should NEVER go back into a burning house.
- If you're thinking about building a home, have a **residential sprinkler system** installed. Next to preventing fires, sprinkler systems and smoke alarms are your best means of home fire protection.
- For more information on home fire safety, visit these websites:

www.nfpa.org
www.usfa.dhs.gov
www.homesafetycouncil.org

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